Key Findings


- People are highly engaged in COVID, with 57% paying attention very closely or extremely and another 33% somewhat closely.

- However, they are having mixed results finding reliable information. 30% say it is difficult to find factual information on COVID and 37% say it has gotten harder since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Americans are split on how easy it is to know if information about COVID is true or not. Information about treatments and schools reopening is the hardest to come by.

- People are hearing information from places they don’t trust, and they rarely consult the most trusted sources. The media is the top source of COVID information (46% get information at least once a day), but only 18% place high trust in COVID info from them.

- Meanwhile, the most trusted sources—people’s doctors and federal health officials—are consulted daily by only 5% and 21% of the population, respectively.
Are Americans Paying Attention to COVID-19?
More than half of Americans are closely paying attention to information about COVID-19.

How closely do you pay attention to information about COVID-19?

![Pie chart showing attention levels to COVID-19 information]

Next, how closely do you pay attention to information about each of the following topics? [COVID-19]

Source: AP-NORC/USAFACTS poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.
How Easy Is It to Find Information on COVID-19?
About a third of Americans say finding information about COVID-19 is difficult.

How easy or difficult is it for you to… [Find factual information about COVID-19]

Source: AP-NORC/USAfacts poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.
Americans are split on whether information is getting easier or more difficult to find since the start of COVID-19.

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, has factual information become easier or more difficult to find?

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, do you think factual information about COVID-19 has become…

Source: AP-NORC/USAFACTS poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.
Those who say finding factual information on COVID-19 is easy say it has gotten easier, but those who say it is hard feel more in the dark than before.

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, has factual information become easier or more difficult to find?

![Bar chart showing the percentage of people who find factual information about COVID-19 easier or more difficult to find.]

Source: AP-NORC/USAFacts poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.
Americans are split on how easy it is to figure out if information about COVID-19 is true or not.

**How difficult is it to do each?**

- **Understand the difference between fact and opinion about COVID-19**
  - Very/Somewhat easy: 48%
  - Neither easy nor difficult: 26%
  - Somewhat/Very difficult: 26%

- **Know if information about COVID-19 is true or not**
  - Very/Somewhat easy: 35%
  - Neither easy nor difficult: 29%
  - Somewhat/Very difficult: 36%

*Source: AP-NORC/USAFacts poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.*
Republicans are more likely to say figuring out if information about COVID-19 is true or not is difficult.

How difficult is it to do each?

- Understand the difference between fact and opinion about COVID-19:
  - Democrats: 19%
  - Independents: 24%
  - Republicans: 33%

- Know if information about COVID-19 is true or not:
  - Democrats: 30%
  - Independents: 33%
  - Republicans: 44%

Source: AP-NORC/USAfacts poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.
Americans think it easier to find information on wearing a mask and getting tested for infection than the safety of treatment and reopening schools.

How easy or difficult is it to find information to make each decision?

![Bar chart showing the percentage of people finding it easy or difficult to find information on various COVID-19-related issues.]

- Wearing a face mask: 70% very/somewhat easy, 18% neither easy nor difficult, 12% somewhat/very difficult.
- When and how to get tested for infection with the virus: 57% very/somewhat easy, 21% neither easy nor difficult, 21% somewhat/very difficult.
- The safety of gathering in groups of more than 10 people: 55% very/somewhat easy, 25% neither easy nor difficult, 19% somewhat/very difficult.
- The safety of eating indoors at a restaurant: 49% very/somewhat easy, 28% neither easy nor difficult, 21% somewhat/very difficult.
- The safety of reopening schools: 39% very/somewhat easy, 29% neither easy nor difficult, 32% somewhat/very difficult.
- The safety and effectiveness of treatments for the virus: 35% very/somewhat easy, 29% neither easy nor difficult, 35% somewhat/very difficult.

When it comes to making decisions about the following issues related to COVID-19, how easy or difficult is it for you to find the information you need?

Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.
How Much Do Americans Trust Information on COVID-19?
While more than half of Americans get daily information on COVID-19 from the news media, less than 2 in 10 trust it.

How much do you trust information about COVID-19 from each of these sources?

Regardless of how often you get information from these sources, how much do you trust information from them about COVID-19?

Source: AP-NORC/USAFACTS poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.
Most Americans who trust news media, social media, and search engines about information on COVID-19 get information from those sources daily.

How often do you get information about COVID-19 from…

Thinking about some of the ways you get information about COVID-19 these days, how often, if at all, do you get information from… Regardless of how often you get information from these sources, how much do you trust information from them about COVID-19?

Source: AP-NORC/USAfacts poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.
There is a sharp partisan divide on what sources to trust for COVID-19 information.

How much do you trust information about COVID-19 from each of these sources?

Regardless of how often you get information from these sources, how much do you trust information from them about COVID-19?

Source: AP-NORC/USAFACTS poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.
Nearly half of Americans have low trust in information about COVID-19 from the federal government.

How much do you trust information from the federal government about COVID-19?

How much do you trust information from the federal government about the following topics? [COVID-19]

Source: AP-NORC/USAFACTS poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.
Accuracy, full information, and an explanation of how the information was gathered are the factors most often associated with trustworthy sources.

How important is each factor to how trustworthy COVID-19 information is?

- **It is accurate**: 85% extremely/very important, 11% somewhat important, 4% not too/not important at all.
- **It provides all relevant information**: 81% extremely/very important, 15% somewhat important, 5% not too/not important at all.
- **It explains the way the information was gathered**: 77% extremely/very important, 18% somewhat important, 5% not too/not important at all.
- **It does not include opinions**: 57% extremely/very important, 30% somewhat important, 12% not too/not important at all.
- **It provides more than one viewpoint on the subject**: 53% extremely/very important, 33% somewhat important, 13% not too/not important at all.
- **It has a high quality presentation**: 33% extremely/very important, 38% somewhat important, 29% not too/not important at all.
- **It includes information I agree with**: 16% extremely/very important, 33% somewhat important, 51% not too/not important at all.

*Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.*
Where Are Americans Finding Information on COVID-19?
The news media is the most frequently used source of COVID-19 information.

How often do you get information about COVID-19 from…

![Bar chart showing the frequency of information sources for COVID-19. The news media is the most frequently used source, followed by social media, and then other sources such as state or local government, federal health officials, and so on.]

Source: AP-NORC/USAfacts poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.
Americans aren’t necessarily getting information most often from the sources they trust the most.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Get news at least daily</th>
<th>Trust a great deal or quite a bit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The news media</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your state or local government</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other online information</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>A search engine such as Google or Bing</td>
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<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal health officials at agencies like the CDC or FDA</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your family and friends</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Trump</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your doctor or health care provider</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thinking about some of the ways you get information about COVID-19 these days, how often, if at all, do you get information from… / Regardless of how often you get information from these sources, how much do you trust information from them about COVID-19?

Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.
Democrats get information on COVID-19 from the media and federal health officials more often than Republicans, Republicans get it more often from Donald Trump.

How often do you get information about COVID-19 from…

![Bar chart showing information sources]

- **News media**: 58% Democrats, 36% Independents, 36% Republicans
- **Federal health officials at agencies like the CDC or FDA**: 27% Democrats, 19% Independents, 17% Republicans
- **Donald Trump**: 8% Democrats, 16% Independents, 24% Republicans

Thinking about some of the ways you get information about COVID-19 these days, how often, if at all, do you get information from…

Source: AP-NORC/USAFacts poll conducted September 15-25, 2020, with 1,043 adults.
State of the Facts Poll 2020

- Poll conducted by The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and funded by USAFacts
- Nationwide poll of 1,043 adults conducted September 15-25 using the AmeriSpeak Panel®
  - AmeriSpeak is NORC’s probability-based panel designed to be representative of all U.S. households.
  - 966 via the web and 77 via telephone
  - Interviews conducted in English and Spanish
- Margin of error +/- 4.1 percentage points
- AAPOR Response Rate 3 of 5.4%